

Indonesian and Korean teachers' awareness of interculturality and world Englishes

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Article Info

Article history:

Received May 8, 2023

Revised Nov 17, 2023

Accepted Jan 30, 2024

Keywords:

Drama performance

Folktale

Intercultural awareness

Interculturality

International collaboration

Performance-based learning

ABSTRACT

English for young learners (EYL) teachers have practiced some creative activities to maintain their pupils' learning with natural exposure to the target language amidst the pandemic. One activity practiced by Indonesian and Korean teachers was an international collaboration to perform a virtual drama of each country's folktale. This phenomenological research aimed at tapping the teachers' perceptions regarding interculturality and world Englishes (WE) in the virtual dramatic play collaboratively conducted and delving into their commitments in honing interculturality and WE. Two Indonesian and Korean teachers were involved in three sessions of in-depth interviews using pre-prepared interview questions. The trustworthiness of the data was achieved by the group discussions allowing the participants to comment on and revise the transcribed data, as well as triangulation by two international collaborators. Thematic analysis was performed to identify emerging themes and to provide novel insights into EYL teachers' encounters with interculturality and WE. The Indonesian and Korean teachers admitted the compatibility between language and culture, the urgency of introducing varieties of English, and the merits of conducting international collaboration to promote interculturality and WE. The teachers are committed to integrate interculturality and WE in their instructions despite some differences in the stipulated curricula.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' intercultural awareness that evidences the non-native English-speaking teachers' (NNESTs) transformation in beliefs about their teaching has been investigated by some scholars due to the current status of English. It is following the shift of its emphasis on linguistic and native-like competence [1] to an ideology that adopts English as an international language (EIL) [2], which particularly follows the concept of world Englishes (WE). Even further, the current shift allows English to be used in intercultural and global communication settings [3]. However, challenges regarding its adaptation and implementation in L2 instructional activities were experienced by EFL teachers in non-English speaking countries like Indonesia and Korea.

Intercultural language teaching (ILT) has not achieved its objectives because of the minimum intercultural aspects integrated into the national curriculum at all educational levels, the struggle to operationally implement the intercultural aspects linked to multiculturalism in particular Indonesian areas, and the absence of intercultural language education from the compulsory subjects for prospective and in-service teachers [4]. In Korea, meanwhile, native speakerism is endorsed to enhance students' communicative competence in teaching English through English (TETE) via the collaboration of at least one native English-speaking teacher (NEST) at school and NNEST. However, the exposure to the standard English and communication with English native speakers provide the students with minimum experience in dealing with communication strategies for global communication, such as intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication competence.

In many other parts of the world, various situations affect the way the teachers conceptualize their beliefs about language, identity, and culture among dominant Western discourses [5]. Such conceptualization stimulates the teachers to adopt an intercultural stance in their teaching practices. EFL teachers endeavor to transform their language belief by shaping and assuring their concept of intercultural education. They strive to value their own cultures as equal to others, along with the concept of intercultural acceptance. One evidence of the ways to raise students' intercultural awareness has been successfully practiced by using various learning resources like two different photographs showing Indonesian and Western cultures [6]. Learning from the photographs, the students could describe, compare, contrast, and evaluate them to shape their intercultural beliefs. In non-English speaking countries, NNESTs are challenged concerning their understanding of how to relate language and culture in intercultural communications within the scope of English as a lingua franca (ELF) [3]. This happens because English is the most dominant language learned by students and used worldwide.

In contrast to the aforementioned evidence from the tertiary education level, this current study investigates the practice at the lower level of education. It aims at compromising the current situation of the multilingual society emergence in Korea and the absence of English for young learners (EYL) curriculum endorsed by the government in Indonesia. Specifically, teaching English to young learners (TEYL) in Indonesia is categorized into a modest level due to its limited time allocation, approximately 1-1.25 hours per week as a locally-tailored school subject [7]. However, considering the important role of English in the world's education, it is urgent to invest and allocate more time to teach English to YLs through various media, such as: songs, poems, stories, drama, games, and other physical activities [8]–[11]. Slightly different from EYL instruction in Indonesia, Korean EYL program follows the government recommendation of TETE. Teachers who face the challenges of English instructions in the non-English speaking context, like those in Indonesia and Korea, should conduct international video conferencing with children from abroad [8]. It is expected that such a program will provide English language exposure in the real-life context to develop students' intercultural awareness.

The relationship between language use and intercultural learning context is seen as dimly interlaced, especially in foreign language teaching. Withal, this should be perceived differently from the advancement of the substantial interpretations of the essentialist positions on language and culture, in which the language controls the worldview [3]. Intercultural communication needs to be realized as a sociocultural process with a crucial dimension to crop up voluble and understandable interactions. In the realm of foreign language teaching, specifically, intercultural communication embraces the notion that language is to be used in various cultural contexts [12]. Negotiating intercultural experiences in foreign language learning is urgent because by learning the language, students will find larger opportunities to use the target language for international communication purposes [13].

Introducing a foreign language as in EFL pedagogy will position learners in various foreign cultural settings and contexts. Along their foreign language learning journey, language learners will strengthen their cultural identity through viewing and interpreting other cultures' ways of being and doing. They will, at the same time, develop their linguistic, cognitive, and social competences [14]. In addition, exposing EFL learners to multi-cultural settings will eventually increase their cultural awareness. Their mindset will be broadened along with their fostered tolerance, cultural empathy, and sensitivity [15]. Developing intercultural awareness and improving intercultural empathy can minimize psychological problems when L2 learners face different cultures from theirs [16].

Departing from the above concern, it is essential that foreign language teachers design instructional activities that will hone their students' intercultural awareness. Such awareness will disembody in interculturality that enables learners to co-construct and negotiate meanings, their attitudes, and perspectives when involving in intercultural interactions. One of the ways to achieve this goal is through exposing students to foreign language cultures. The effective way is through encouraging EFL learners to go abroad and experience foreign cultures. EFL learners' intercultural awareness was proven to be significantly changed after their presence abroad [17]. Based on their study findings, the EFL learners who had experienced living abroad showed a considerably higher intercultural awareness compared to those who had

not experienced going nor living abroad. Unfortunately, the chances to go and experience living abroad are not widely available to all EFL learners around the world. Therefore, EFL teachers must find more feasible ways to expose their students to the target language without getting onto airplanes [18].

The massive spread of English across nations has shifted English speakers' demography. As a result, the majority of English users are no longer native speakers from the inner circle but non-native speakers who use English alongside their mother tongues [19]. Given this fact, EFL students need to learn practical English that is relevant to the actual communications [20], [21]. Nevertheless, the reality shows that many EFL teachers still prefer teaching their English classrooms the standard variety of American and/or British English [22]–[25], instead of introducing WE. Within the framework of the globalized world, WE refers to a number of English varieties that are spoken around the world [26]. The major foci of WE are on distinct linguistic features, interactions, as well as processes of communication when speakers converse or connect one another by using English as a medium language. The term WE is closely associated with two other terms: EIL and ELF.

In relation to WE, a renowned concept of ELF is labeled as *lingua franca core* (LFC). LFC is defined as selected pronunciation features of English that are derived from NNEs' understanding and communication of each other [27]. In her argument, during English communication, English pronunciation intelligibility among L2 speakers and learners is weighted to be more crucial than English pronunciation accuracy. In the contexts of ELF and WE, intelligibility can be guaranteed by learning and adhering to a set of reformulated rules of English pronunciation [28]. Intelligibility refers to the speech production that is capable of being comprehended due to its being coherently and clearly spoken. The intelligibility among non-native speakers of English is more prioritized than between native speakers and non-native speakers of English. Some examples of LFC features are the substitution of /θ/ and /ð/ by other accessible consonants, the consonant omission of problematic consonant clusters, as well as non-essentially teaching word stress or stress-timed rhythm. Deviation from native speakers' features should not be considered as errors but tolerable and acceptable. In addition, it is necessary to complement LFC with sharpening L2 learners' accommodation skills towards acknowledging WE to ensure smooth and comprehensible communication among English speakers from various L1 cultural backgrounds [28], [29].

WE, EIL, and ELF approaches are deemed to pose a threat to the conventional beliefs in English language teaching contexts, in which the standard forms of American and British English used to be the only role models. However, the fact that a considerable number of English varieties can be effectively used in various parts of the world implies that there is a wide variety of English to choose instead of merely American and British standard varieties [30]. Consequently, selecting a particular variety of English needs to be done carefully considering several aspects, such as whether the chosen variety meets students' communicative needs. Local varieties of English may serve the students' communicative needs more effectively than standard American and/or British English [31].

The development of WE, EIL, and ELF (with the concept of LFC) contributes to the broadening scope of English-speaking culture [32], in which English speakers may show their own local cultural identity that goes beyond the inner circles' cultures dominating the conventional ELT contexts [27]. An obvious example is the emergence of English variety-based teaching materials [21]. This phenomenon indicates that WE, EIL, and ELF as well as interculturality are closely entwined in EFL contexts. A series of studies and reviews on WE, EIL, and ELF have been conducted in the past few years [22], [25], [31], [33]–[36]. Most of those publications showcased how the introductions of WE, EIL, and ELF are empirically conducted and perceived by students and teachers in English classes in non-native English-speaking contexts. Two implications of WE, EIL, and ELF could be drawn: i) EFL teachers should eradicate stereotypes that are often directed to non-native English varieties (English varieties spoken in expanding circles) by starting to introduce those varieties in their English classes and ii) EFL teachers should design English instructional activities and provide learning materials that expose their students to diverse English varieties other than those of the inner circle variations.

In this present study, EFL teachers' creativity to approach interculturality and WE is demonstrated. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, online or virtual learning has been undeniably undergone by both adult and young learners. Virtual performance-based learning (VPBL) activity is one of myriad virtual or remote learning activities. The activity elaborated in this study was a virtual drama performed by young learners of the primary education level in Indonesia and Korea. The drama performance was staged virtually because of the inability of the learners to meet in the face-to-face learning session. Similar to the virtual drama discussed in the previous study [37], Korean young learners performed "the rabbit and the turtle" drama in their classroom while attending the virtual conference with their Indonesian counterparts. However, due to a restriction of meeting in person in Indonesian public places back in 2021, the virtual drama performance titled "The Tale of Wendit" by the Indonesian students was recorded using Zoom meeting platform from

every student's home. The recording was played during the virtual conference scheduled at the same time as "the rabbit and the turtle" performance to meet the objective of the online intercultural exchange (OIE).

Departing from the urge to modify various modes of teaching and learning activities from conventional face-to-face to virtual sessions, telecollaboration, as a variety of OIE [38], [39] has motivated the Indonesian and Korean EYL teachers to conduct similar activities. Termed as VPBL, this designated program adapts the principle of telecollaboration. It prepares the students to learn language and different cultures simultaneously and appreciate different ways of speaking English as in the concept of WE. Accordingly, they collaborated and staged the Indonesian and Korean folktales through virtual drama performances within the scheme of OIE. Spotlighting English drama that used to be performed on an actual stage, for and from the time being, it should be shifted to a virtual stage. Not only is the technicality to be taken into account, but also the local and cultural contents as well as L2 inputs are to be devised.

Unlike the previous studies [38], [39] this present study's participants were primary school teachers and students from both countries (Indonesia and Korea) who attended the tailored OIE program. Very few studies have been conducted to interweave EYL instruction, interculturality, WE, and international collaboration. Such a dearth of previous studies in this area has made this present study need to fill the gap. Two research questions are posed.

- How do EYL teachers in Indonesia and Korea perceive interculturality and WE in the VPBL activities through the collaborative virtual dramatic play?
- What are the Indonesian and Korean EYL teachers' commitments in honing interculturality and WE during the collaborative virtual drama performance?

2. METHOD

2.1. Research design

Phenomenological design was chosen by the researchers, investigating the solutions to the formerly unsolved problems of teaching and learning English drama during the limited in-person access due to the world pandemic. The challenging situation was when EYL teachers in Indonesia and Korea were to keep integrating culture-related contents and English acquisition variables during their instructional activities. Despite the constraint, EYL teachers were still required to raise their students' intercultural awareness and ability to adapt to varieties of English as well as cultural differences among English speakers in the international settings. Finding solutions to the unsolved problems and viewing the phenomenon by means of a series of scientific procedures are the veins of this phenomenological method [40].

This research was conducted after the researchers revealed the fact that the virtual performances staging the Indonesian folklore "the tale of wendit" and Korean folklore "the rabbit and the turtle" have been screened on many occasions in Indonesia, Korea, and overseas. The recordings of the drama performances were appreciated by the international audiences, EYL teachers and practitioners, because of the creativity in performing English drama without in-person encounter [41]. Finding out the hidden and undiscovered truth about EYL teachers' perceptions and commitments for conducting the virtual drama instruction and performance integrating cultural and WE-related topics among their students, this phenomenological design constitutes an ideal method to describe the situation accurately and factually by revealing the frequency of occurrence and categorizing the collected information from the informants in both countries [42].

2.2. Research participants

This current study recruited two EYL teachers from Indonesia and Korea. Those two teachers have had experiences teaching English drama and organizing virtual drama performances in the previous years. Accordingly, they were chosen to share their perceptions, attitudes, and commitments to integrate intercultural contents and WE into their collaborative virtual drama performances. Through the international collaboration between the two countries, the students' exposure to varieties of English, Indonesian English and Korean English, and differing cultures of the English speakers has been expectedly devised. The Table 1 presents the demographic information of the Indonesian and Korean EYL teachers under the investigation.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

No.	Participant's pseudonym	Nationality	Gender	Education background	SAE	Teaching experience
1	Mia_ID	Indonesian	Female	Bachelor's degree from an Indonesian University	No	11 years
2	Jin_KR	Korean	Female	Bachelor's Degree from a Korean University	No	5 years

Note. Mia and Jin are participants' pseudonyms; ID and KR refer to nationalities; SAE stands for study abroad experience.

2.3. Data collection and analysis

The main stages of the phenomenological method encompass the collection of data in the form of statements related to the immediate past and the present with respect to the phenomenon under investigation. This design is flexible in identifying as much diversity and variation as possible from the informants before making assumptions and predictions for future trends [43]. After collecting the data through three sessions of in-depth interviews using pre-prepared interview questions related to interculturality and WE, the succeeding stage was examining things as they really are as well as establishing meanings of those things through data transcription, exploration, and explanation. The main purpose of this data analysis stage is to uncover the direct experiences of the respondents that are taken at face value [44].

During the analysis stage, the researchers emphasized the details of settings, individual perceptions, and personal attitudes regarding the studied phenomenon, the integration of interculturality and WE during the virtual drama performance in the EYL and OIE settings. Examining the settings, perceptions, and attitudes from multiple vantage points will help the researchers understand the phenomenon under investigation [45]. The last stage was deciding whether the deduced and inferred framework or findings can be implemented in another setting as a future best practice or model. The findings of this phenomenological study are expected to be beneficial evaluation and decision-making tools that can be used in other ways, such as providing a wealth of information for policy administrators and/or formulators to base their decisions on [42], [43].

This succeeding part explicates detailed steps of the thematic analysis [46]–[48] performed by the researchers to analyze the interview data. i) Familiarization with the data: the researchers meticulously immersed themselves in the transcribed data. This step includes reading and rereading the interview transcriptions word by word and line by line to conduct a preliminary analytical observation of the qualitative data and ii) Coding: using a coding framework, some labels were created from the highlighted statements of the interviewees. This coding step was completed by collating all data extracts and labels (open codes). This labeling stage marked the key features of the transcriptions that will lead to further analysis, iii) Searching for themes: This stage was executed to identify similar data and to group several themes/codes that belong to the same theme. All codes were gathered into some subcategories to make sense of the theme connections (axial coding), iv) Reviewing themes: this step entailed checking and rechecking whether all themes and subthemes were configured appropriately. This review stage typically collapses two noticeably-similar themes into one or divides one theme into two or more themes by returning to the raw data, v) Defining and naming themes: The researchers cross-checked the naming of all codes and subcategories (themes and subthemes), and vi) Writing up the report: this last stage weaved together and displayed all themes (codes, subcategories, and categories) to answer the research questions. Thick descriptions of the Indonesian and Korean EYL teachers' perspectives, attitudes, and commitments for integrating interculturality and WE into their virtual drama performance will be presented.

The data validation was achieved by means of two stages: i) organizing a group discussion with all participants aiming for member checking and ii) triangulation from two international collaborators (Uri_ID and Eony_KR from Indonesia and South Korea respectively). Both personnel initiated and participated in the virtual drama performances and thus could be involved in justifying the convergence of information from the research participants. With the inherently interpretive characteristics of the data, these validation stages assured the trustworthiness of the data findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

EYL teachers' intercultural perspective emphasizes the urgency of effective communication and understanding cultures in the classroom settings [49]–[51] for teaching young learners. This perspective posits that effective intercultural communication [14] requires knowledge of different cultural norms, values, and communication methods. It is encouraged to learn to communicate effectively with people from different cultures using English as a medium language. For EYL teachers, it is essential to consider how they adapt their teaching methods that recognize and value the linguistic and cultural diversities of the YLs across nationalities. This succeeding section presents the results of this present study regarding how the Indonesian and Korean EYL teachers perceive interculturality and WE during their performance-based learning activities in the form of virtual dramatic performance, as well as their commitments to incorporate interculturality and WE into their OIE program.

3.1. EYL teachers' perceptions

3.1.1. Compatibility between language and culture

Both Indonesian and Korean EYL teachers shared the same opinion about the need to learn cultures of the target language. Jin_KR stated that she was not only teaching English skills but also the things beyond

what she and her students could meet with English, like cultures. In the same vein, Mia ID asserted that while learning English, her students study the cultures of English-native speakers as the additional knowledge and experiences. To exemplify the compatibility between language and culture, Jin_KR made an analogy connecting English and culture as.

“English as a window to learn cultures. The students' local culture can be a root that makes them stand; while the other culture is a branch that grows from the tree. They value their own culture, but they never underestimate other cultures. They can share their culture using English and follow the language's rules like native speakers do.” (Jin_KR)

The teachers' initial agreement towards the urgency of infusing culture in language learning is in line with the opinion of Victoria and Sangiamchit [52] that the English language classroom presents an ideal vantage point to observe the interplay between language and culture. Jin KR and Mia ID found their students' excitement in learning English from their foreign peers particularly to expose themselves to natural ways of using English. They agreed that their students became more confident with how they used English for communication during the international collaboration activities. With their Korean peers, Indonesian YLs were self-assured to use English as they knew that their Korean peers would accept and appreciate their way of speaking English, and vice-versa. Teachers play an essential role in contextualizing interculturality in their teaching to foster intercultural communications between teacher-student and student-student whose cultural backgrounds are different from one another [53].

Jin_KR cherished and highly appreciated the students' efforts in performing the virtual drama of Indonesian and Korean tales using English. In performing the virtual drama “the tale of wendit” from Indonesia and “the rabbit and the turtle” from Korea, the Indonesian and Korean YLs exhibited each country's cultures by introducing specific vocabularies and specific entities that do not exist in their foreign peers' cultures. Jin_KR emphasized that there was an awareness that the students could learn English from each other although they are not native speakers of English. Jin_KR further elucidated,

“The students are interested in cultures so much. They enjoy the Indonesian drama performed by the Indonesian students. Also, they are motivated to perform their Korean folktale using English to make Indonesian students understand Korean culture.” (Jin_KR)

In accordance with the aforementioned findings, many experts have long recognized the urgency of taking intercultural deportment in foreign language teaching [5]. Similar to what has been stated by both participants of this current study, the compatibility between language and culture in ELT could be attained by students whose nationalities and cultural backgrounds are different [12], [16]. Therefore, they should be equipped with intercultural communicative competence (ICC), in which L2 is put in various ranges of skills, knowledge, and attitudes towards differences.

All teachers admitted the benefits of teaching various cultures while their students were learning English. The statement was confirmed by Eony_KR, the representative of sejong city office of education (SCOE) Korea and the initiator of the international collaboration between Korean and Indonesian primary schools. She emphasized the importance of introducing various cultures to Korean YLs through English instructions. By organizing the international collaboration in the L2 pedagogy field, it is expected that YLs are prepared to be agents of change who value humanities and diversity. By watching their foreign peers' drama performance, Korean students raised their awareness of the values of world peace, human rights, cultural diversity, and self-actualization (Eony_KR). In the same light, Uri_ID, the Director of Indonesia international collaboration (INTI) who facilitated the collaboration between Indonesian and Korean primary schools, signified that the internalization of interculturality into the Indonesian students would foster mutual respect. Sharing the same EFL contexts, Korea and Indonesia have demonstrated a potential collaboration to instill interculturality among their young generations.

3.1.2. Urgency of introducing WE

Koreans and Indonesians undeniably have typical English accents influenced by their L1s. However, English remains the mediatory language to share local cultures from one another. Showcasing English varieties from the two countries, it is evident that both primary schools have introduced WE in addition to interculturality during their OIE program. The Korean and Indonesian EYL teachers are aware of how language and culture are closely knotted and influencing one another. Therefore, they realize the need to introduce various cultures and English varieties to their YLs. Jin_KR explained,

“We need to introduce various kinds of English, such as Indian English, Mexican English, and even English spoken by non-native speakers, such as Japanese English, Chinese English, and French English.” (Jin_KR)

Additionally, Mia_ID underlined the importance of broadening the YLs’ knowledge while learning English. Her argument is as below.

“I need to introduce other kinds of English only for the knowledge. I inform them different ways of people to speak English. Then they can choose which one is their preference in the future.” (Mia_ID)

WE relates to how the teachers introduced various Englishes to their students. The concept of WE emerges because of the recognition that English is a global language and is used in various ways across different cultures. Language inclusiveness makes it feasible for English varieties to be used in inner, outer, and expanding circles for its global context [54]. WE acknowledges multilingual and multicultural speakers to use their own English variations that are formed from their non-native English speakers’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds [24], [33]. Regarding VPBL, the YLs in Indonesia and Korea should understand that learning English is not only learning the target language and its cultures, but also learning English with their local or Indonesian and Korean contexts. The idea of using a local learning environment to internalize WE ideology to YLs has gained support from the previous study [55].

As all parties were aware of WE, they could accept different English language acquisition levels. Jin_KR mentioned that the Korean YLs’ imbalance of language skill mastery made their speaking and writing sometimes hardly understood by the Indonesian YLs. However, the strong Korean accent produced by the Korean YLs was accepted by the Indonesian YLs. Listening to the Korean accent motivated the Indonesian YLs to speak English confidently with their own accent (Mia_ID). Referring to children’s language development theory, second language acquisition involves multiple processes which allow children to pick up the language without being conscious of the language form, to use the language in real communication, and to be worry-free of being interfered by their first language [56]–[58]. Hence, VPBL has facilitated the YLs’ second language acquisition processes by involving them in a non-isolated language learning environment which integrates WE. Their Indonesian and Korean English varieties were no longer perceived as international communication barriers.

3.1.3. Benefits of international collaboration for promoting interculturality and WE

Both participants in this present study confirmed that their students were interested in their foreign peers’ cultures. By watching the drama performance video from Indonesia, Jin_KR’s students learned about Indonesian cultures and increased their interest in Indonesia. Furthermore, Mia_ID informed that the fame of Korean cultures attracted the Indonesian YLs to look for additional information about Korea from Korean movies and songs. Because of the international collaboration, the Indonesian YLs got more opportunities to learn Korean cultures directly from their foreign peers. To triangulate the teachers’ explanations about the urgency of promoting WE, Eony_KR stated,

“Within various activities suggested by all teachers, international collaboration can be as a tool to experience WE. Furthermore, it has been proved that international collaboration can negotiate a common understanding of WE.” (Eony_KR)

From the teachers’ explanation and Eony_KR’s triangulation, in planning the activities for YLs, EYL teachers should ensure that all activities are child-friendly and linked to cognitive, educational, and cultural values [59], [60]. This international collaboration has fulfilled the need to support the YLs’ second language acquisition. It provided extended time for the target language learning and facilitated the Korean and Indonesian YLs to increase their communicative competence [57], [60]–[62]. Furthermore, in terms of interculturality and WE, the Korean and Indonesian YLs were given more opportunities to explore the local culture contexts for their target language learning, to understand varieties of English, and to be prepared as intercultural speakers who have gained insight into their own and other cultures [23], [24], [38], [55].

3.2. EYL teachers’ commitments for integrating interculturality and WE

3.2.1. Different integration of interculturality and WE across curricula

The Indonesian and Korean EYL teachers’ beliefs in the importance of interculturality and WE that have been evinced in the previous section have motivated them to promote interculturality and WE in their teaching and learning activities. They are committed to introducing the power of being global citizens. Their

current stance positively affects their efforts to infuse interculturality and WE across curricula. Jin_KR affirmed,

“International collaboration itself has a power for our students to be global citizen. Since they see their global friends through videos, screens, letters, or small gifts during the Culture Day, they get to know there live our friends from the other side of the earth. Once they have recognized them, they have kinda connection with them. It motivates our students to act on something.” (Jin_KR)

In line with Jin_KR’s statement, Mia_ID assented to the use of various media to introduce cultures and English varieties in the EYL classrooms. During the Culture Day mentioned by Jin_KR, for instance, learning media could be utilized to present topics such as foods, clothes, and music. Then, Mia_ID suggested various cultural sharing activities to introduce the foreign peers to the information about students’ identities, school, country, historical places, foods, games, and musical instruments by using English as a medium of instruction. In Korea, the primary school curriculum specifically requires the integration of cultures into the teaching and learning processes. Jin_KR asserted,

“In English curricula in Korea, there, we need to teach various cultures. Especially in my class, I have an international culture exchange project with foreigners. My students do understand that their teacher integrates different cultures in the English class.” (Jin_KR)

From her statement, the teacher’s commitment to integrate interculturality and WE in English instruction was rooted from and supported by the government policy. This is in line with TEYL practices in Korea [61]. English is a subject taught from grade 3-6 to equip YLs with experiences of using English communicatively and contextually. Focusing on interculturality and WE, Eony_KR added,

“To help students broaden their perspectives on world issues and nurture a sense of global community, we offer global projects such as webinar series with world experts, Sejong Youth Forum, virtual cultural exchange camps with students throughout Asia.” (Eony_KR)

This official support from the government is similar to TEYL practices in Taiwan and Japan [63]. The government policy for implementing soft content and language integrated learning (CLIL) has been established and implemented in Taiwan and Japan. CLIL framework requires culture as an aspect to integrate in L2 instructional activities [64], [65].

In the Indonesian setting, English subject is not stipulated by the primary school curriculum, but it is offered as a locally-tailored school subject [7]. To teach English, primary school teachers in Indonesia are challenged to exert their creativity to conduct various English activities such as implementing soft-CLIL, designing a theme-based activity, and partaking in international collaborations with teachers and students overseas [41], [62], [66]. In addition to the VPBL as a part of the international collaboration with the Korean primary school, there were some other ways to integrate interculturality and WE into Mia_ID’s English instructional activities in Indonesia. She confirmed that her students liked to learn English from listening to an English version of a story that they had heard in Indonesian language (L1), listening to the Indonesian classical songs which were translated into English, performing dramas of Indonesian folktales in English, as well as reading and listening to English classical stories and songs from various English speakers.

3.2.2. Co-teaching program with speakers from the inner and outer circles of English

Co-teaching program has been practiced by both the Indonesian and Korean EYL teachers during the international collaboration. However, the co-teaching program with English speakers from the inner and outer circles of English is only practiced in Korea. Jin_KR explicated,

“There is a native-speaker teacher in my school from the UK. We co-teach because it is difficult for my students to understand English spoken by the native speaker without my presence in the class. My students get exposure to both American and British English as my English is American English.” (Jin_KR)

Jin_KR’s statement was supported by Eony_KR who underscored the government commitment to nurture globally competent individuals in Korea. The Korean Office of Education has invested in inviting and hiring English native-speakers from the UK, USA, Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and South Africa to sharpen the Korean students’ English competence, as stated in the following excerpt.

“Co-teaching with a NEST is designed to give opportunities for young learners to acquire English from native English speakers. In addition, it allows the students to be exposed to native English speakers' cultures, customs, and linguistic habits in public education. Thus, the students can be familiar with foreign teachers' sentiments and empathy. Sixty-five foreign teachers currently teach English to elementary and secondary schools in Sejong City Korea.” (Eony_KR)

The Korean government's commitment to providing NESTs at schools is prominently against the new paradigm of teaching English as an international language (TEIL), ELF, and WE [32]. Co-teaching between NESTs and NNESTs essentially aims at providing students with the experiences of listening to English from various models. However, the collaboration between Korean teachers and NESTs is evidenced to be unsatisfactory [61]. The demand of native-likeness as the parameter of successful L2 acquisition is no longer relevant. As the new paradigm of WE come into play, YLs will get more opportunities to interact with non-native English speakers around the globe. In the future, when they become real intercultural speakers of English, they will be confident to speak English with their own accent and understand non-native English interlocutors' messages. In this wise, intelligibility will keep the international communication flowing smoothly [24], [52], [54], [61].

4. CONCLUSION

Interculturality and WE are currently two key concepts in English language education. Interculturality refers to the recognition and understanding of cultural diversity and the ability to communicate effectively across cultures. WE refer to the various forms of English that have developed in different parts of the world as the results of varying cultural and historical backgrounds. These two concepts altogether highlight the importance of valuing linguistic and cultural diversity in our globalized world. Consequently, there is a need for L2 pedagogy to take into account the diverse ways in which English is used and spoken around the world.

This present study found that the perceptions and commitments of the Indonesian and Korean EYL teachers towards interculturality and WE evidenced their efforts to provide young learners experiences of using English in a global context through the international collaboration of virtual drama performances. Although there was an absence of curriculum for teaching English in the primary schools of Indonesia, the teacher found a way to provide an environment of using English with non-native speakers of English for the purpose of raising their students' awareness of interculturality and varieties of English WE. In contrast, the Korean government supports English learning by providing the experiences for the Korean students to interact with native speakers of English without neglecting the students' needs to communicate with non-native speakers of English.

Regarding the Indonesian and Korean EYL teachers' perceptions of the VPBL activities through the virtual dramatic play conducted between Indonesia and Korea, the teachers have revealed some points as follows: the compatibility between language and culture, the urgency of introducing varieties of English within the framework of WE, and the advantages of conducting international collaboration for promoting interculturality and WE. The Indonesian and Korean EYL teachers are committed to introduce interculturality and WE to their YLs in both countries despite some differences in the stipulated curricula. They believe that the international collaboration, as exemplified by the collaborative virtual drama performances, will step aboard a co-teaching program of EYL teachers from both countries to share different cultural entities and English varieties to their YLs.

5. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This current study has two limitations, and thus it might be implausible to generalize the findings. Subsequently, this final section proposes some suggestions to improve future research on this area. First, the data collection was limited to the small number of participants, two EYL teachers from Indonesian and Korean primary schools. This small number of participants was due to the very initial collaboration between two primary schools in both countries for the collaborative virtual drama performances. To enhance the validity and credibility of our findings, triangulation was conducted with two international collaborators and initiators from Indonesia and Korea. As more international collaborations are designed, more EYL teachers and students will reap the benefits and be the sources of richer data of future research. Second, perceptions and commitments towards interculturality and WE are not fixed and can change over time as the societies become more globalized and diverse. The data of this current study were collected based on the evidence during the world pandemic. Limited access for performing virtual dramas for the international collaboration was the issue during that hardest time. As the world is healing, opportunities for collaborations are no longer

ajar. Therefore, it is indispensable for EYL educators, policymakers, and researchers to stay informed about the latest trends and research in this field and to be open to new approaches and perspectives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful to Ms. Daeyeon Park, the Coordinator of International Education and Exchange, Secondary Education Division, Sejong City Office of Education, Korea, and Ms. Urifah, the Director of Indonesia international collaboration (INTI) for their supports to initiate the bilateral collaboration and facilitate data collection and triangulation of this present study.




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